

AMS-002 CIP CON

APPARATUS AND METHODS FOR REDUCING  
EMBOLIZATION DURING TREATMENT OF CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE

Reference To Related Applications

0999447 " 11604

The present application is a continuation-in-  
5 part of U.S. patent application Serial No. 09/333,074,  
filed June 14, 1999, which is a continuation-in-part of  
International Application PCT/US99/05469, filed March  
12, 1999, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S.  
patent application Serial No. 09/078,263, filed March  
10 5, 1998.

Field Of The Invention

This invention relates to apparatus and  
methods for protecting against embolization during  
vascular interventions, such as carotid artery  
15 angioplasty and endarterectomy. More particularly, the  
apparatus and methods of the present invention induce  
substantially continuous retrograde flow through the  
internal carotid artery during treatment during an  
interventional procedure, without significant blood  
20 loss.

Background of the Invention

Carotid artery stenoses typically manifest in the common carotid artery, internal carotid artery or external carotid artery as a pathologic narrowing of the vascular wall, for example, caused by the deposition of plaque, that inhibits normal blood flow. Endarterectomy, an open surgical procedure, traditionally has been used to treat such stenosis of the carotid artery.

An important problem encountered in carotid artery surgery is that emboli may be formed during the course of the procedure, and these emboli can rapidly pass into the cerebral vasculature and cause ischemic stroke.

In view of the trauma and long recuperation times generally associated with open surgical procedures, considerable interest has arisen in the endovascular treatment of carotid artery stenosis. In particular, widespread interest has arisen in transforming interventional techniques developed for treating coronary artery disease, such as angioplasty and stenting, for use in the carotid arteries. Such endovascular treatments, however, are especially prone to the formation of emboli.

Such emboli may be created, for example, when an interventional instrument, such as a guide wire or angioplasty balloon, is forcefully passed into or through the stenosis, as well as after dilatation and deflation of the angioplasty balloon or stent

5 flow.

15 embolization is a common event causing subclinical  
cerebral damage.

emboli out of the vessel of interest. These previously known systems, however, provide less than optimal solutions to the problems of effectively removing emboli.

25 describes cerebral angioplasty methods and devices wherein two concentric shafts are coupled at a distal end to a distally-facing funnel-shaped balloon. A lumen of the innermost shaft communicates with an opening in the funnel-shaped balloon at the distal end.

and is open to atmospheric pressure at the proximal end. In use, the funnel-shaped balloon is deployed proximally (in the direction of flow) of a stenosis, occluding antegrade flow. An angioplasty balloon  
5 catheter is passed through the innermost lumen and into the stenosis, and then inflated to dilate the stenosis. The patent states that when the angioplasty balloon is deflated, a pressure differential between atmospheric pressure and the blood distal to the angioplasty  
10 balloon causes a reversal of flow in the vessel that flushes any emboli created by the angioplasty balloon through the lumen of the innermost catheter.

While a seemingly elegant solution to the problem of emboli removal, several drawbacks of the  
15 device and methods described in the Solano et al. patent seem to have lead to abandonment of that approach. Chief among these problems is the inability of that system to generate flow reversal during placement of the guide wire and the angioplasty balloon  
20 across the stenosis. Because flow reversal does not occur until after deflation of the angioplasty balloon, there is a substantial risk that any emboli created during placement of the angioplasty balloon will travel too far downstream to be captured by the subsequent  
25 flow reversal. It is expected that this problem is further compounded because only a relatively small volume of blood is removed by the pressure differential induced after deflation of the angioplasty balloon.

0953447-11607

Applicant has determined another drawback of the method described in the Solano patent: deployment of the funnel-shaped balloon in the common carotid artery ("CCA") causes reversal of flow from the external  
5 carotid artery ("ECA") into the internal carotid artery ("ICA"), due to the lower flow impedance of the ICA. Consequently, when a guide wire or interventional instrument is passed across a lesion in either the ECA or ICA, emboli dislodged from the stenosis are  
10 introduced into the blood flow and carried into the cerebral vasculature via the ICA.

The insufficient flow drawback identified for the system of the Solano patent is believed to have prevented development of a commercial embodiment of the  
15 similar system described in EP Publication No. 0 427 429. EP Publication No. 0 427 429 describes use of a separate balloon to occlude the ECA prior to crossing the lesion in the ICA. However, like Solano, that publication discloses that flow reversal occurs only  
20 when the dilatation balloon in the ICA is deflated.

Chapter 46 of Interventional Neuroradiology: strategies and practical techniques (J.J. Connors & J. Wojak, 1999), published by Saunders of Philadelphia, PA, describes using a coaxial balloon angioplasty  
25 system for patients having with proximal ICA stenoses. In particular, a small, deflated occlusion balloon on a wire is introduced into the origin of the ECA, and a guide catheter with a deflated occlusion balloon is positioned in the CCA just proximal to the origin of

0599447-11604

5

10

25

induced after deflation of the angioplasty balloon.  
If, on the other hand, an external pump is utilized,  
retrieval of these downstream emboli may require a flow  
rate that cannot be sustained for more than a few  
5 seconds, resulting in insufficient removal of emboli.

Furthermore, with the dilation balloon in  
position, the occlusion balloons are not inflated until  
after inflation of the dilation balloon. Microemboli  
generated during advancement of the dilation catheter  
10 into the stenosed segment may therefore be carried by  
retrograde blood flow into the brain before dilation,  
occlusion, and aspiration are even attempted.

A still further drawback of both the device  
in EP Publication No. 0 427 429 and the Interventional  
15 Neuroradiology device is that, if they are used for  
placing a stent in the ICA instead of for ICA  
angioplasty, the stent often extends beyond the  
bifurcation between the ECA and the ICA. The occlusion  
balloon placed by guide wire in the ECA may snag the  
20 stent during retrieval. Emergency surgery may then be  
required to remove the balloon.

Imran U.S. Patent No. 5,833,650 describes a  
system for treating stenoses that comprises three  
concentric shafts. The outermost shaft includes a  
25 proximal balloon at its distal end that is deployed  
proximal of a stenosis to occlude antegrade blood flow.  
A suction pump then draws suction through a lumen in  
the outermost shaft to cause a reversal of flow in the  
vessel while the innermost shaft is passed across the

0959447-11601

Like the device of the Solano patent, the device of the Imran patent appears to suffer the drawback of potentially dislodging emboli that are carried into the cerebral vasculature. In particular, once the distal balloon of Imran's innermost shaft is deployed, flow reversal in the vasculature distal to the distal balloon ceases, and the blood perfused through the central lumen of the innermost shaft establishes antegrade flow. Importantly, if emboli are generated during deployment of the distal balloon, those emboli will be carried by the perfused blood directly into the cerebral vasculature, and again pose a risk of ischemic stroke. Moreover, there is some evidence that reperfusion of blood under pressure through a small diameter catheter may contribute to hemolysis and possible dislodgment of emboli.

In applicant's co-pending U.S. patent application Serial No. 09/333,074, filed June 14, 1999,



which is incorporated herein by reference, applicant described the use of external suction to induce regional reversal of flow. That application further described that intermittently induced regional flow reversal overcomes the drawbacks of naturally-aspirated systems such as described hereinabove. However, the use of external suction may in some instances result in flow rates that are too high to be sustained for more than a few seconds. In addition, continuous use of an external pump may result in excessive blood loss, requiring infusion of non-autologous blood and/or saline that causes hemodilution, reduced blood pressure, or raise related safety issues.

In view of these drawbacks of the previously known emboli removal systems, it would be desirable to provide methods and apparatus for removing emboli from within the carotid arteries during interventional procedures, such as angioplasty or carotid stenting, that reduce the risk that emboli are carried into the cerebral vasculature.

It also would be desirable to provide methods and apparatus for removing emboli from within the carotid arteries during interventional procedures, such as angioplasty or carotid stenting, that provide substantially continuous low retrograde blood flow from the treatment zone, thereby reducing the risk that emboli are carried into the cerebral vasculature.

It further would be desirable to provide emboli removal methods and apparatus that prevent the

099447-11601

development of reverse flow from the ECA and antegrade into the ICA once the CCA has been occluded, thereby enhancing the likelihood that emboli generated by a surgical or interventional procedure are effectively  
5 removed from the vessel.

It still further would be desirable to provide an occlusion balloon on a guide wire for placement in the ECA during stenting of the ICA that mitigates the risk of snagging the stent during  
10 removal.

It also would be desirable to provide methods and apparatus for removing emboli during a carotid stenting procedure that enable filtering of emboli and reduced blood loss.

15 Summary of the Invention

In view of the foregoing, it is an object of this invention to provide methods and apparatus for removing emboli from within the carotid arteries during interventional procedures, such as angioplasty or  
20 carotid stenting, that reduce the risk that emboli are carried into the cerebral vasculature.

It also is an object of the present invention to provide methods and apparatus for removing emboli from within the carotid arteries during interventional  
25 procedures, such as angioplasty or carotid stenting, that provide substantially continuous low retrograde blood flow from the treatment zone, thereby reducing the risk that emboli are carried into the cerebral vasculature.

0599447 "11601

It is another object of the present invention to provide emboli removal methods and apparatus that prevent the development of reverse flow between the ECA and ICA once the common carotid artery has been  
5 occluded, thereby enhancing the likelihood that emboli generated by a surgical or interventional procedure are effectively removed from the vessel.

It is a further object of this invention to provide methods and apparatus for an occlusion balloon  
10 on a guide wire for placement in the ECA during stenting of the ICA that mitigates the risk of snagging the stent during removal.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide methods and apparatus for removing  
15 emboli during a carotid stenting procedure that enable filtering of emboli and reduced blood loss.

The foregoing objects of the present invention are accomplished by providing interventional apparatus comprising an arterial catheter, an occlusion  
20 balloon disposed on a guide wire, a venous return catheter, and optionally a blood filter. The arterial catheter has proximal and distal ends, an aspiration lumen extending therebetween, an occlusion element disposed on the distal end, and a hemostatic port and  
25 blood outlet port disposed on the proximal end that communicate with the aspiration lumen. The aspiration lumen is sized so that an interventional instrument, e.g., an angioplasty catheter or stent delivery system, may be readily advanced therethrough to the site of a

099447-11601

stenosis in either the ECA (proximal to the balloon) or the ICA.

In accordance with the principles of the present invention, the arterial catheter is disposed in the CCA proximal of the ICA/ECA bifurcation, the occlusion balloon on the guide wire is disposed in the ECA to occlude flow reversal from the ECA to the ICA, and the blood outlet port of the arterial catheter is coupled to the venous return catheter, with or without the blood filter disposed therebetween. Higher arterial than venous pressure, especially during diastole, permits substantially continuous flow reversal in the ICA during the procedure (other than when a dilatation balloon is inflated), thereby flushing blood containing emboli from the vessel. The blood is filtered and reperfused into the body through the venous return catheter.

Methods of using the apparatus of the present invention are also provided.

#### 20 Brief Description of the Drawings

Further features of the invention, its nature and various advantages will be more apparent from the accompanying drawings and the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments, in which:

25 FIGS. 1A and 1B are schematic views of previously known emboli protection systems;

FIG. 2 is a schematic view of the emboli protection system of the present invention;

FIGS. 4A and 4B are views of the distal end of an alternative interventional device suitable for use in the system of the present invention; and

FIGS. 6A-6B are, respectively, a schematic view and a cross-sectional view of an alternative embodiment of the device of FIGS. 3;

### Description of the Preferred Embodiments

With respect to FIG. 1A, drawbacks associated with naturally-aspirated emboli removal systems, such as described in the above-mentioned patent to Solano and European Patent Publication, are described. No flow reversal is induced by those systems until after balloon 10 of angioplasty catheter 11 first is passed

In FIG. 1B, system 17 described in the above-mentioned patent to Imran is shown. As described hereinabove, deployment of distal balloon 18, and ejection of blood out of the distal end of the inner catheter, may dislodge emboli from the vessel wall distal to balloon 18. The introduction of antegrade flow through inner catheter 19 is expected only to exacerbate the problem by pushing the emboli further into the cerebral vasculature. Thus, while the use of positive suction in the Imran system may remove emboli located in the confined treatment field defined by the proximal and distal balloons, such suction is not expected to provide any benefit for emboli dislodged distal of distal balloon 18.

In FIG. 1B, system 17 described in the above-mentioned patent to Imran is shown. As described hereinabove, deployment of distal balloon 18, and ejection of blood out of the distal end of the inner catheter, may dislodge emboli from the vessel wall distal to balloon 18. The introduction of antegrade flow through inner catheter 19 is expected only to exacerbate the problem by pushing the emboli further into the cerebral vasculature. Thus, while the use of positive suction in the Imran system may remove emboli located in the confined treatment field defined by the proximal and distal balloons, such suction is not expected to provide any benefit for emboli dislodged distal of distal balloon 18.

Apparatus 30 comprises catheter 31 having an aspiration lumen and occlusion element 32, and guide wire 35

5 having inflatable balloon 36 disposed on its distal end. In accordance with the principles of the present invention, antegrade blood flow is stopped when both occlusion element 32 in the CCA and inflatable balloon 36 are deployed. Furthermore, the aspiration lumen of  
10 catheter 31 is connected to a venous return catheter (described hereinbelow), disposed, for example, in the patient's femoral vein. In this manner a substantially continuous flow of blood is induced between the treatment site and the patient's venous vasculature.  
15 Because flow through the artery is towards catheter 31, any emboli dislodged by advancing a guide wire or angioplasty catheter 33 across stenosis S causes the emboli to be aspirated by catheter 31.

Unlike the previously known naturally-  
20 aspirated systems, the present invention provides  
substantially continuous retrograde blood flow through  
the ICA while preventing blood from flowing retrograde  
in the ECA and antegrade into the ICA, thereby  
preventing emboli from being carried into the cerebral  
25 vasculature. Because the apparatus and methods of the  
present invention "recycle" emboli-laden blood from the  
arterial catheter through the blood filter and to the  
venous return catheter, the patient experiences  
significantly less blood loss.

Referring now to FIG. 3A, embolic protection apparatus 40 constructed in accordance with the principles of the present invention is described. Apparatus 40 comprises arterial catheter 41, guide wire 45, venous return line 52, tubing 49 and optional blood filter 50.

Catheter 41 includes distal occlusion element 42, proximal hemostatic port 43, e.g., a Touhy-Borst connector, inflation port 44, and blood outlet port 48. Guide wire 45 includes balloon 46 that is inflated via inflation port 47. Tubing 49 couples blood outlet port 48 to filter 50 and blood inlet port 51 of venous return line 52.

Guide wire 45 and balloon 46 are configured to pass through hemostatic port 43 and the aspiration lumen of catheter 41 (see FIGS. 3C and 3D), so that the balloon may be advanced into and occlude the ECA. Port 43 and the aspiration lumen of catheter 41 are sized to permit additional interventional devices, such as angioplasty balloon catheters, atherectomy devices and stent delivery systems to be advanced through the aspiration lumen when guide wire 45 is deployed.

Guide wire 45 preferably comprises a small diameter flexible shaft having an inflation lumen that couples inflatable balloon 46 to inflation port 47. Inflatable balloon 46 preferably comprises a compliant material, such as described hereinabove with respect to occlusion element 42 of emboli removal catheter 41.

059447-1604



099447-11504

Venous return line 52 includes hemostatic port 53, blood inlet port 51 and a lumen that communicates with ports 53 and 51 and tip 54. Venous return line 52 may be constructed in a manner per se known for venous introducer catheters. Tubing 49 may comprise a suitable length of a biocompatible material, such as silicone. Alternatively, tubing 49 may be omitted and blood outlet port 48 of catheter 41 and blood inlet port 51 of venous return line 52 may be lengthened to engage either end of filter 50 or each other.

With respect to FIGS. 3B and 3C, distal occlusion element 42 comprises expandable bell or pear-shaped balloon 55. In accordance with manufacturing techniques which are known in the art, balloon 55 comprises a compliant material, such as polyurethane, latex or polyisoprene which has variable thickness along its length to provide a bell-shape when inflated. Balloon 55 is affixed to distal end 56 of catheter 41, for example, by gluing or a melt-bond, so that opening 57 in balloon 55 leads into aspiration lumen 58 of catheter 41. Balloon 55 preferably is wrapped and heat treated during manufacture so that distal portion 59 of the balloon extends beyond the distal end of catheter 41 and provides an atraumatic tip or bumper for the catheter.

As shown in FIG. 3D, catheter 41 preferably comprises inner layer 60 of low-friction material, such as polytetrafluoroethylene ("PTFE"), covered with a

layer of flat stainless steel wire braid 61 and polymer cover 62 (e.g., polyurethane, polyethylene, or PEBAX). Inflation lumen 63 is disposed within polymer cover 62 and couples inflation port 44 to balloon 55. In a preferred embodiment of catheter 41, the diameter of lumen 58 is 7 Fr, and the outer diameter of the catheter is approximately 9 Fr.

Referring now to FIGS. 4A and 4B, an alternative embodiment of occlusion element 42 of the system of FIG. 3A is described. In FIGS. 4A and 4B, occlusion element 42 of emboli removal catheter 41 comprises self-expanding wire basket 65 covered with elastomeric polymer 66, such as latex, polyurethane or polyisoprene. Alternatively, a tightly knit self-expanding wire mesh may be used, with or without an elastomeric covering.

Catheter 41 is surrounded by movable sheath 67. Catheter 41 is inserted transluminally with sheath 67 in a distalmost position, and after basket 65 has been determined to be in a desired position proximal to a stenosis, sheath 67 is retracted proximally to cause basket 65 to deploy. Upon completion of the procedure, basket 65 is again collapsed within sheath 67 by moving the sheath to its distalmost position. Operation of the system of FIG. 3A using the emboli removal catheter of FIGS. 4A and 4B is similar to that described hereinbelow for FIGS. 5A-5D, except that the occlusion element self-expands when sheath 67 is retracted,

00991417-111501

rather than by infusing an inflation medium to balloon 55.

Referring now to FIGS. 5A-5D, use of the apparatus of FIGS. 3 in accordance with the methods of the present invention is described. In FIGS. 5, stenosis **S** is located in internal carotid artery **ICA** above the bifurcation between the internal carotid artery **ICA** and the external carotid artery **ECA**. In a first step, catheter 41 is inserted, either

10 percutaneously and transluminally or via a surgical cut-down, to a position proximal of stenosis **S**, without causing guide wire 45 to cross the stenosis. Balloon 55 of distal occlusion element 42 is then inflated, preferably with a radiopaque contrast solution, via

15 inflation port 44. As seen in FIG. 5A, this creates reversal of flow from the external carotid artery **ECA** into the internal carotid artery **ICA**.

Venous return line 52 then is introduced into the patient's femoral vein, either percutaneously or

20 via a surgical cut-down. Filter 50 is then coupled between blood outlet port 48 of catheter 41 and blood inlet port 51 of venous return line 52 using tubing 49, and any air is removed from the line. Once this circuit is closed, negative pressure in the venous

25 catheter during diastole will establish a low rate continuous flow of blood through aspiration lumen 58 of catheter 41, as seen in FIG. 5B, to the patient's vein via venous return line 52.

09991417 " 11601

05991417-111601

This low rate continuous flow due to the difference between venous pressure and arterial pressure will continue throughout the interventional procedure. Specifically, blood passes through aspiration lumen 58 and blood outlet port 48 of catheter 41, through biocompatible tubing 49 to filter 50, and into blood inlet port 51 of venous return line 52, where it is reperfused into the remote vein. Filtered emboli collect in filter 50 and may be studied and characterized upon completion of the procedure.

Continuous blood flow (except during inflation of any dilatation instruments) with reperfusion in accordance with the present invention provides efficient emboli removal with significantly reduced blood loss. Alternatively, filter 50 may be omitted, in which case emboli removed from the arterial side will be introduced into the venous side, and eventually captured in the lungs. Because of a low incidence of septal defects, which could permit such emboli to cross-over to the left ventricle, the use of filter 50 is preferred.

Referring to FIG. 5C, with balloon 55 of occlusion element 42 inflated and a retrograde flow established in the ICA, guide wire 45 and balloon 46 are advanced through aspiration lumen 58. When balloon 46 is disposed within the ECA, as determined, e.g., using a fluoroscope and a radiopaque inflation medium injected into balloon 46, balloon 46 is inflated. Occlusion of the ECA prevents the development of

reverse flow in the **ECA** from causing antegrade flow in the **ICA**. Another interventional instrument, such as conventional angioplasty balloon catheter 71 having balloon 72, is loaded through hemostatic port 43 and aspiration lumen 58 and positioned within the stenosis. Hemostatic port 43 is closed and instrument 71 is actuated to disrupt the plaque forming stenosis S.

As seen in FIG. 5D, upon completion of the angioplasty portion of the procedure using catheter 71, balloon 72 is deflated. Throughout the procedure, except when the dilatation balloon is fully inflated, the pressure differential between the blood in the ICA and the venous pressure causes blood in ICA to flow in a retrograde direction in the ICA into aspiration lumen 58 of emboli removal catheter 41, thereby flushing any emboli from the vessel. The blood is filtered and reperfused into the patient's vein.

Optionally, increased volumetric blood flow through the extracorporeal circuit may be achieved by attaching an external pump, such as a roller pump, to tubing 49. If deemed beneficial, the external pump may be used in conjunction with device 40 at any point during the interventional procedure. Instrument 71, guide wire 45, emboli removal catheter 41, and venous return line 52 are then removed from the patient, completing the procedure.

As set forth above, the method of the present invention protects against embolization, first, by preventing the reversal of blood flow from the ECA to

the ICA when distal occlusion element 42 is inflated,  
and second, by providing continuous, low volume blood  
flow from the carotid artery to the remote vein in  
order to filter and flush any emboli from the vessel  
5 and blood stream. Advantageously, the method of the  
present invention permits emboli to be removed with  
little blood loss, because the blood is filtered and  
reperfused into the patient. Furthermore, continuous  
removal of blood containing emboli prevents emboli from  
10 migrating too far downstream for aspiration.

Referring now to FIGS. 6, apparatus 140  
constructed in accordance with the present invention is  
described. Apparatus 140 is an alternative embodiment  
of apparatus 40 described hereinabove and comprises  
15 arterial catheter 141 having distal occlusion element  
142, proximal hemostatic port 143, inflation port 144  
and blood outlet port 148. Guide wire 145 includes  
balloon 146 that is inflated via inflation port 147.  
Biocompatible tubing 149 couples blood outlet port 148  
20 to filter 150 and to blood inlet port 151 of venous  
return line 152. Arterial catheter 141, guide wire  
145, venous return line 152 and tubing 149 are  
constructed as described hereinabove, except as noted  
below.

25 Guide wire 145 and balloon 146 are configured  
to pass through guide wire lumen 164 of catheter 141  
(see FIG. 6B), so that the balloon may be advanced into  
and occlude the ECA. Additionally, catheter 141  
comprises aspiration lumen 158 which is sized to permit

099447-11601

interventional devices, such as angioplasty balloon catheters, atherectomy devices and stent delivery systems to be advanced through port 143 and the aspiration lumen. As shown in FIG. 6B, the key  
5 difference between catheters 41 and 141 lies in the method of advancing the guide wire through the catheter: guide wire 45 is advanced through the aspiration lumen of catheter 41, whereas guide wire 145 is advanced through separate guide wire lumen 164 of  
10 catheter 141.

Catheter 141 preferably is constructed from inner layer 160 of low-friction material, such as polytetrafluoroethylene ("PTFE"), covered with a layer of flat stainless steel wire braid 161, and polymer  
15 cover 162 (e.g., polyurethane, polyethylene, or PEBAX). Inflation lumen 163 is disposed within polymer cover 162 and couples inflation port 144 to occlusion element 142. Guide wire lumen 164 also is disposed within polymer cover 142, and is sized to permit guide wire  
20 145 and balloon 146 to pass therethrough. In a preferred embodiment of catheter 141, the diameter of inflation lumen 163 is .014", the diameter of guide wire lumen 164 is .020", and the diameter of lumen 158 is 7 Fr. To retain an outer catheter diameter in the  
25 preferred embodiment of approximately 9 Fr., the thickness of the catheter wall varies around the circumference from a maximum of 0.026" at the location of guide wire lumen 164 to a minimum of 0.005" 180 degrees away.

09591437 111601

Referring now to FIGS. 7, an alternative embodiment of the guide wire occlusion apparatus of the present invention is described. Occlusion apparatus 200 comprises guide wire 201, occlusion balloon 202, 5 inflation lumen 203, and wedge 204. Wedge 204 may comprise a resilient material, such as a polymer or resilient wire, and reduces the risk that balloon 202 will snag on a stent that extends beyond the bifurcation of the ICA and ECA.

10 For the reasons described hereinabove, it is desirable when performing a stenting procedure in the ICA to occlude the ECA, to prevent flow reversal from the ECA and into the ICA. Accordingly, an occlusion balloon on a guide wire is placed in the ECA and 15 inflated to block that artery. A stent then may be placed in the ICA to ensure proper blood flow to the ICA. It is often desirable, however, for such stents to extend beyond the bifurcation between the ECA and the ICA. Consequently, when the occlusion balloon on 20 the guide wire is deflated and withdrawn from the ECA, there is a risk that the balloon may snag the stent. In such cases, emergency surgery is often required to remove the balloon.

Referring now to FIG. 7B, occlusion apparatus 25 200 is illustratively shown in conjunction with catheter 41. Stent S extends beyond the bifurcation between the ECA and the ICA and into the CCA. Balloon 202 is deflated and positioned for retrieval. Because balloon 202 is disposed on guide wire 201 instead of a

099447-11604



While preferred illustrative embodiments of the invention are described above, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that various changes and  
15 modifications may be made. The appended claims are intended to cover all such changes and modifications that fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention.

While preferred illustrative embodiments of the invention are described above, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that various changes and  
15 modifications may be made. The appended claims are intended to cover all such changes and modifications that fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention.